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Internet Address: <http://www.bls.gov/ro2/home.htm>

Information: Martin Kohli, (212) 337-2420

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Media Contact: Michael L. Dolfman, (212) 337-2500

Fax-On-Demand: (212) 337-2412

WORK FATALITIES IN NEW YORK CITY IN 2004

A total of 107 fatal work injuries were reported in New York City in 2004, up from 94 in 2003, according to the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Regional Commissioner Michael L. Dolfman noted that the 2004 increase followed four consecutive years in which the fatality count had declined or was unchanged. (See chart 1.) The 14-percent increase in workplace fatalities for the City in 2004 exceeded the 2-percent increase for the nation as a whole. Still, the number of fatal work injuries in New York City in 2004 was well under the high of 191 fatalities reached in 1993.

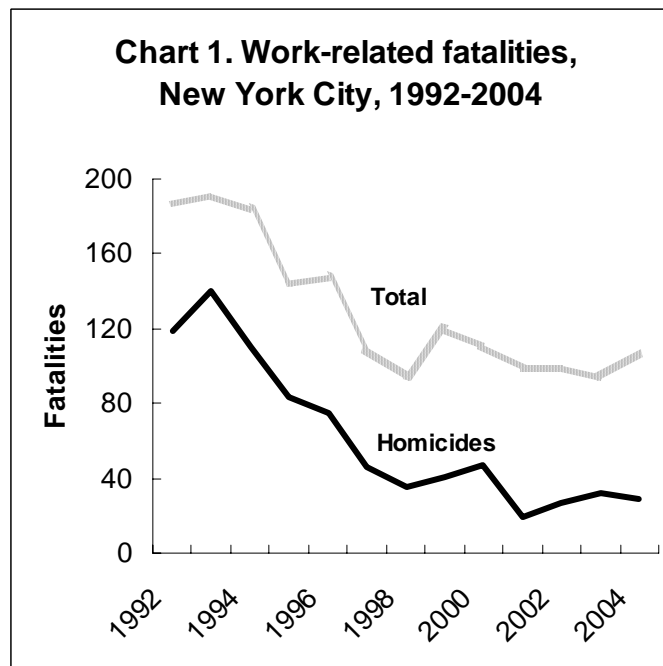
Homicides remained the leading cause of occupational fatalities in New York City in 2004, accounting for 29 deaths, or slightly more than one in four. The number of homicides in 2004, although above the series low of 19 in 2001, remained well below the series high of 140 in 1993. (See chart 1.) Falls to a lower level were the second most frequent type of fatality with 19 deaths, followed by self-inflicted injuries (15), all of which were suicides, and pedestrians struck by vehicles or mobile equipment (11). At this level of detail, none of the other types of fatalities accounted for more than 7 deaths in 2004.

Over the year, the number of workplace homicides in the City was down by 3. This drop was more than offset by the increases in falls to a lower level (7), pedestrians struck by vehicle or mobile equipment (7), and self-inflicted injuries (4). (See table A.)

The 15 self-inflicted injuries in 2004 were the most recorded since 1992, the first year of the fatality census, surpassing the previous high of 12 in 1999. Although less than 2 percent of all occupational fatalities in the nation occurred in New York City, 8 percent of the job-related suicides in the nation happened in the City.



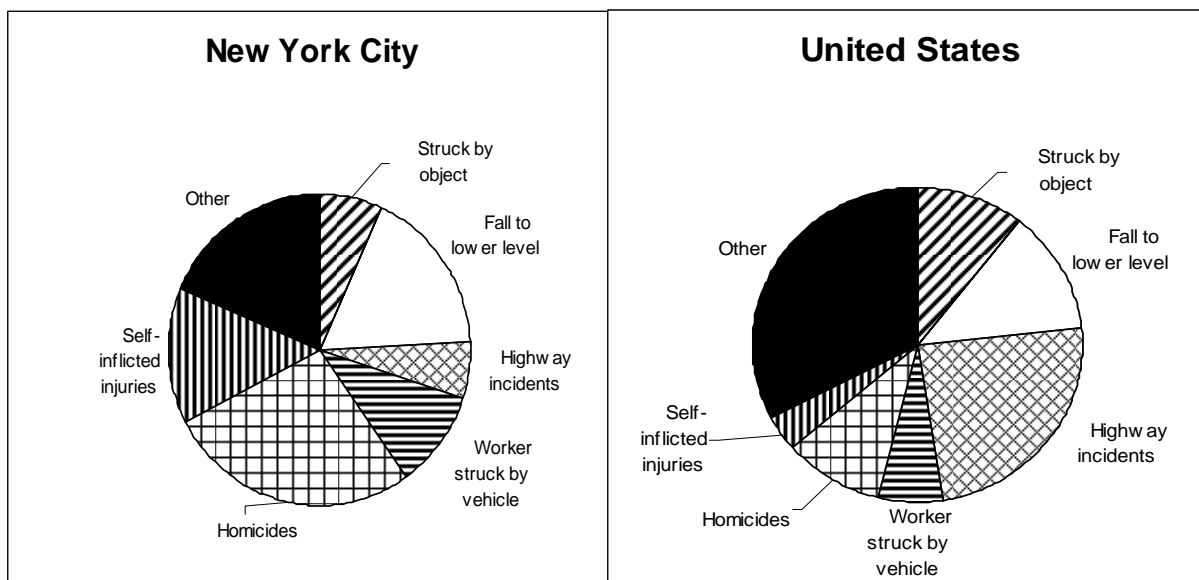
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NOTE: Data for 2001 exclude fatalities resulting from the September 11 terrorist attacks.

As in the past, highway incidents were the most common cause of occupational fatalities in the United States, accounting for about one in every four fatal work injuries in 2004. (By contrast, in New York City, only 6 percent of all fatalities were related to this event.) Nationally, the second most frequent type of fatality was falls to a lower level accounting for 13 percent of the total, followed by struck by an object and homicides, both at 10 percent, and pedestrian struck by vehicle or mobile equipment, at 7 percent. As these figures suggest, the distribution of fatalities in the nation differed from the distribution in New York City. (See chart 2.) In particular, the share of highway fatalities was much lower in New York than for the nation as a whole, while the shares of homicides and self-inflicted injuries were higher.

Chart 2. Distribution of fatal occupational injuries, 2004



At the national level, fatal work injuries rose 2 percent in 2004 from the revised total of 5,575 fatalities reported for 2003. Despite this increase, the total was the third lowest annual count recorded by the fatality census. Fatal highway incidents were up slightly over the year, from 1,353, to 1,374, while falls to a lower level rose sharply, reaching 732 from 604. Homicides, on the other hand, dropped sharply to 551 from 632, the lowest count yet recorded.

Table A. Fatal occupational injuries in the United States and New York City by event or exposure, 2003 and 2004

Event or exposure	United States		New York City	
	2003	2004	2003	2004
Total	5,575	5,703	94	107
Highway incidents	1,353	1,374	5	6
Pedestrian struck by vehicle, mobile equipment	337	377	4	11
Homicides	632	551	32	29
Self-inflicted injuries	218	200	11	15
Fall to lower level	604	732	12	19
Struck by object	531	596	4	7
Exposure to caustic, noxious, or allergenic substances ...	122	114	5	6

Profile of fatal work injuries by industry, occupation, and demographic characteristics

The construction sector recorded 28 fatalities in New York City in 2004—the highest number of fatal injuries of any private industry. (See table 2.) In construction, falls to a lower level were the most common event, accounting for 54 percent of the sector’s fatalities. In New York City, the construction sector accounted for one out of every four fatalities; nationally, construction also led other sectors with 1,224 incidents, making up 21 percent of all job-related deaths. Over the year, the number of fatal injuries in New York’s construction sector increased by five.

Retail trade recorded the second highest fatality count, 13, in New York City during 2004. The accommodation and food service sector ranked third with 12 fatalities. In both retail trade, and accommodation and food service, homicides were the leading type of fatal injury with eight deaths in each sector. Government employees accounted for 11 occupational fatalities. The fatality counts in these three sectors were little changed over the year.

Construction and extraction occupations experienced 27 fatalities in New York City in 2004, one-fourth of all work-related deaths and the most of any major occupational group. (See table 3.) In construction and extraction, falls to a lower level were the most common event, accounting for 52 percent of the fatal occupational injuries. Construction laborers accounted for more than half of the fatalities within this occupational group. Transportation and material moving occupations recorded 20 work deaths, the second highest number of fatalities among the major occupational groups. Motor vehicle operators, including truck drivers and taxi drivers, accounted for half the fatalities. In New York City, the only other major occupational groups to have double-digit fatalities in 2004 were sales and related occupations with 11 fatalities, and protective service occupations with 10. Homicides were the most frequent type of fatal injury in both of these groups.

Forty percent of those fatally injured on-the-job in New York City in 2004 were white non-Hispanics. (See table 4.) Hispanics or Latinos accounted for 31 percent of the City’s fatalities, black non-Hispanics, 21 percent, and Asians, 10 percent. The number of fatalities in three of the four racial/ethnic groupings increased over the year, black non-Hispanics being the exception.

TECHNICAL NOTE

Definitions

For a fatality to be included in the census, the decedent must have been employed (that is working for pay, compensation, or profit) at the time of the event, engaged in a legal work activity, or present at the site of the incident as a requirement of his or her job. These criteria are generally broader than those used by federal and state agencies administering specific laws and regulations. (Fatalities that occur during a person's commute to or from work are excluded from the census counts.)

Data presented in this release include deaths occurring in 2004 that resulted from traumatic occupational injuries. An injury is defined as any intentional or unintentional wound or damage to the body resulting from acute exposure to energy, such as heat, electricity, or kinetic energy from a crash, or from the absence of such essentials as heat or oxygen caused by a specific event, incident, or series of events within a single workday or shift. Included are open wounds, intracranial and internal injuries, heatstroke, hypothermia, asphyxiation, acute poisonings resulting from short-term exposures limited to the worker's shift, suicides and homicides, and work injuries listed as underlying or contributory causes of death.

Information on work-related fatal illnesses is not reported in the BLS census and is excluded from the attached tables because the latency period of many occupational illnesses and the difficulty of linking illnesses to work make identification of a universe problematic.

Measurement techniques and limitations

Data for the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries are compiled from various federal, state, and local administrative sources--including death certificates, workers' compensation reports and claims, reports to various regulatory agencies, medical examiner reports, and police reports--as well as news and other non-governmental reports. Diverse sources are used because studies have shown that no single source captures all job-related fatalities. Source documents are matched so that each fatality is counted only once. To ensure that a fatality occurred while the decedent was at work, information is verified from two or more independent source documents or from a source document and a follow-up questionnaire. Approximately 30 data elements are collected, coded, and tabulated, including information about the worker, the fatal incident, and the machinery or equipment involved.

Identification and verification of work-related fatalities

In 2004, there were 153 cases included at the national level for which work relationship could not be independently verified; however, the information on the initiating source document for these cases was sufficient to determine that the incident was likely to be job related. Data for these fatalities, which primarily affected self-employed workers, are included in the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries counts. An additional 29 fatalities submitted by states were not included because the initiating source document had insufficient information to determine work relationship and could not be verified by either an independent source document or a follow-up questionnaire.

States may identify additional fatal work injuries after data collection closeout for a reference year. In addition, other fatalities excluded from the published count because of insufficient information to determine work relationship may subsequently be verified as work related. States have up to one year

to update their initial published state counts. This procedure ensures that fatality data are disseminated as quickly as possible and that no legitimate case is excluded from the counts. Thus, each year's report should be considered preliminary until the next year's data are issued. Over the last 5 years, increases in the published counts based on additional information have averaged less than 20 fatalities per year, or less than 0.3 percent of the revised total. The BLS news release issued September 22, 2004, reported a total of 5,559 fatal work injuries for 2003. Since then, an additional 16 fatal work injuries were identified, bringing the total for 2003 to 5,575. Revised counts for 2004 will be available in May 2006.

Federal/state agency coverage

The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries includes data for all fatal work injuries, whether they are covered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or other federal or state agencies or are outside the scope of regulatory coverage. Thus, any comparison between the BLS fatality census counts and those released by other agencies should take into account the different coverage requirements and definitions being used.

Several federal and state agencies have jurisdiction over workplace safety and health. OSHA and affiliated agencies in states with approved safety programs cover the largest portion of the nation's workers. However, injuries and illnesses occurring in certain industries or activities, such as coal, metal, and nonmetal mining and highway, water, rail, and air transportation, are excluded from OSHA coverage because they are covered by other federal agencies, such as the Mine Safety and Health Administration and various agencies within the Department of Transportation.

Fatalities occurring among several other groups of workers are generally not covered by any federal or state agencies. These groups include self-employed and unpaid family workers, which accounted for about 20 percent of the fatalities; laborers on small farms, accounting for about 1 percent of the fatalities; and state and local government employees in states without OSHA-approved safety programs, which accounted for about 4 percent. (Approximately one-half of the states have approved OSHA safety programs, which cover state and local government employees.)

Acknowledgements

BLS thanks the participating states, New York City, and the District of Columbia for their efforts in collecting accurate, comprehensive, and useful data on fatal work injuries. BLS also appreciates the efforts of all federal, state, local, and private sector agencies that submitted source documents used to identify fatal work injuries. Among these agencies are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration; the National Transportation Safety Board; the U.S. Coast Guard; the Mine Safety and Health Administration; the Employment Standards Administration (Federal Employees' Compensation and Longshore and Harbor Workers' divisions); the Department of Energy; state vital statistics registrars, coroners, and medical examiners; state departments of health, labor and industries, and workers' compensation agencies; state and local police departments; and state farm bureaus.

Table 1. Fatal occupational injuries in New York City by event or exposure, 2003 and 2004

Event or exposure ¹	2003	2004	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total	94	107	100
Transportation incidents	12	17	16
Highway incidents	5	6	6
Collision between vehicles, mobile equipment	4	—	—
Pedestrian, nonpassenger struck by vehicle, mobile equipment	4	11	10
Assaults and violent acts	43	44	41
Homicides	32	29	27
Shooting	24	17	16
Stabbing	4	4	4
Self-inflicted injury	11	15	14
Suicide, attempted suicide	11	15	14
Contact with objects and equipment	9	13	12
Struck by object	4	7	7
Struck by falling object	3	3	3
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects	4	—	—
Falls	14	24	22
Fall to lower level	12	19	18
Fall from scaffold, staging	4	6	6
Fall on same level	—	4	4
Exposure to harmful substances or environments	9	9	8
Contact with electric current	—	3	3
Exposure to caustic, noxious, or allergenic substances	5	6	6
Inhalation of substance	4	—	—
Ingestion of substance	—	5	5
Fire or explosion	7	—	—
Fire--unintended or uncontrolled	6	—	—

¹ Based on the 1992 *Occupational Injury and Illness Classification Manual*. Includes other events and exposures, such as bodily reaction, in addition to those shown separately.

— Data not available.

(See note at end of tables.)

Table 2. Fatal occupational injuries in New York City by industry, 2003 and 2004

Industry ¹	NAICS code ¹	2003	2004	
		Number	Number	Percent
Total		94	107	100
Private industry		83	96	90
Goods producing		27	33	31
Construction	23	23	28	26
Heavy and civil engineering construction	237	4	3	3
Specialty trade contractors	238	17	20	19
Manufacturing	31-33	4	5	5
Service producing		56	63	59
Trade, transportation, and utilities		24	27	25
Retail trade	44-45	12	13	12
Food and beverage stores	445	8	7	7
Grocery stores	4451	7	6	6
Wholesale trade	42	—	4	4
Transportation and warehousing	48-49	10	8	7
Transit and ground passenger transportation	485	3	—	—
Financial activities		6	7	7
Real estate and rental and leasing	53	6	6	6
Real estate	531	5	6	6
Educational and health services		—	4	4
Health care and social assistance	62	—	3	3
Professional and business services		8	8	7
Administrative and waste services	56	6	7	7
Leisure and hospitality		10	12	11
Accommodation and food services	72	8	12	11
Food services and drinking places	722	7	12	11
Other services, except public administration		7	4	4
Government ²		11	11	10

¹ Based on the 2002 *North American Industry Classification System*.

² Includes fatalities to workers employed by governmental organizations regardless of industry.

— Data not available.

(See note at end of tables.)

Table 3. Fatal occupational injuries in New York City by occupation, 2003 and 2004

Occupation ¹	2003	2004	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total	94	107	100
Management occupations	3	5	5
Protective service occupations	13	10	9
Law enforcement workers	4	5	5
Other protective service workers	8	5	5
Security guards	8	5	5
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	6	7	7
Building cleaning workers	3	6	6
Janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners	3	5	5
Sales and related occupations	15	11	10
Supervisors, sales workers	5	7	7
Retail sales workers	8	3	3
Cashiers	5	3	3
Office and administrative support occupations	4	4	4
Construction and extraction occupations	21	27	25
Construction trades workers	17	23	21
Construction laborers	11	14	13
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	5	7	7
Transportation and material moving occupations	19	20	19
Motor vehicle operators	12	10	9
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer	5	3	3
Taxi drivers and chauffeurs	3	—	—
Material moving workers	3	8	7

¹ Based on the 2000 *Standard Occupational Classification* system.

— Data not available.

(See note at end of tables.)

Table 4. Fatal occupational injuries in New York City by selected demographic characteristics, 2003 and 2004

Characteristic	2003	2004	
	Number	Number	Percent
Total	94	107	100
Employee status			
Wage and salary ¹	82	96	90
Self-employed ²	12	11	10
Sex			
Male	87	101	94
Female	7	6	6
Age³			
20 - 24 years	9	9	8
25 - 34 years	24	18	17
35 - 44 years	23	31	29
45 - 54 years	23	20	19
55 - 64 years	11	19	18
65 years and over	—	8	7
Race or ethnic origin⁴			
White, non-Hispanic	37	43	40
Black, non-Hispanic	22	21	20
Asian	7	10	9
Hispanic or Latino	28	33	31

¹ May include volunteers and workers receiving other types of compensation.

² Includes self-employed workers, owners of unincorporated businesses and farms, paid and unpaid family workers, members of partnerships, and may include owners of incorporated businesses.

³ Because there may have been no incidents reported for some ages or because the data do not meet publication criteria, information is not available for all age groups. In addition, some fatalities may have had insufficient information with which to determine the age of the decedents.

⁴ Persons identified as Hispanic may be of any race. The individual race categories shown exclude data for Hispanics.

— Data not available.

NOTE: Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Percentages may not add to totals because of rounding. Dashes indicate less than 0.5 percent or data that are not available or that do not meet publication criteria.